

Articles of Faith and Covenant

OF

PARK STREET CHURCH,

WITH

Rules and Regulations.



ARTICLES OF FAITH
AND
COVENANT
OF
PARK STREET CHURCH,
BOSTON:
WITH
RULES AND REGULATIONS.



BOSTON:
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Articles of Faith and Government.*

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 23, 1809.



WE, the Subscribers, having agreed to unite in the establishment of a new Congregational Church in Boston, by the name of *Park Street Church*, think it proper to make a declaration of that Faith which is the bond of our ecclesiastical union, and which we shall expect to find in all those who shall hereafter participate in our religious privileges and communion.

First. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of GOD, and the only perfect rule of Christian faith and practice.

Second. We profess our decided attachment to that system of the Christian religion which is distinguishingly denominated *Evangelical*; more

* These Articles are to be subscribed by the Pastor and Deacons. Candidates for admission to the Church are required to subscribe to only the Confession of Faith, found in Article IV., Section 7 of the Rules and Regulations.

particularly to those doctrines, which in a proper sense, are styled the Doctrines of Grace, viz.: "That there is one and but one living and true GOD, subsisting in three persons, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST; and that these Three are the one GOD, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; that GOD from all eternity, according to the counsel of His own will, and for His own glory, fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass; that GOD in His most holy, wise and powerful providence preserves and governs all His creatures and all their actions; that by the Fall, all mankind lost communion with GOD, are under His wrath and curse, and liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever; that GOD out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity elected some to everlasting life, entered into a covenant of grace, to deliver them from a state of sin and misery, and introduce them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer; that this Redeemer is the Lord JESUS CHRIST, the eternal Son of GOD, who became man, and continues to be GOD and man in two distinct natures and one person forever; that the effectual calling of sinners is the work of GOD'S Spirit; that their justification is only for the sake of CHRIST'S righteousness by faith." And though we deem no man or body of men infallible, yet we believe that those divines that were eminently distinguished in the time of the Reformation, possessed the spirit, and main-

tained in great purity, the peculiar doctrines of our holy religion; and that these doctrines are in general clearly and happily expressed in the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, and in the Confession of Faith owned and consented unto by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches, assembled at Boston, (N. E.) May 12th, A. D. 1680.

Third. In regard to our ecclesiastical government and discipline, with our sister churches in this Commonwealth we adopt the Congregational form, as contained in the Platform of Church Discipline, gathered out of the Word of God, and agreed upon by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches, assembled in the Synod at Cambridge, (N. E.) A. D. 1648.

Fourth. In order to admission to membership in this Church, it is understood that every Candidate shall be previously examined, and give credible evidence of a ground of the comfortable hope of a personal condition of grace, through the renovation of the soul, by the special influences of the HOLY SPIRIT, implying repentance for sin and faith in JESUS CHRIST the Redeemer.

Finally. We hereby covenant and engage, as fellow Christians of one faith, and partakers of the same hope and joy, to give up ourselves unto the Lord, for the observing the ordinances of

CHRIST together in the same Society, and to unite together into one body for the public worship of God, and the mutual edification one of another in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus: exhorting, reproofing, comforting, and watching over each other, for mutual edification;—looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great GOD, even our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

Boston, February 27, A. D. 1809.





Form of Admission.



A D D R E S S .

YOU have presented yourselves in this public manner before God, to dedicate yourselves to His service, and to incorporate yourselves with His visible people. You are about to profess supreme love to Him, sincere contrition for all your sins, and faith in the Lord JESUS CHRIST; to enter into a solemn covenant to receive the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, as they are offered in the Gospel, and to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. We trust you have well considered the nature of these professions and engagements. The transaction is solemn, and will be attended with eternal consequences. GOD and holy angels are witnesses. Yet be not discouraged. In the name of CHRIST you may come boldly to the God of grace, and provided only you have sincere desires to be His, may venture thus unalterably to commit yourselves,

and trust in Him for strength to perform your vows.

Attend, now, to the

C O V E N A N T .

In the presence of GOD, His holy angels, and this assembly, you do now solemnly dedicate yourselves to GOD the FATHER as your chief good; to the SON of GOD, as your Mediator and Head, and to the HOLY SPIRIT as your Sanctifier, Comforter, and Guide. To this one GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, you do heartily give up yourselves in an everlasting covenant to love and obey Him.

Having subscribed the *Confession of Faith and Rules of Government* adopted by this Church, you promise to walk with us in conformity to them, in submission to the requirements of the Gospel, and in attendance on its ordinances, and that, by the aid of the Divine Spirit, you will seek to make this profession a reality in your life.

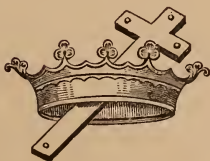
This, you severally profess and engage?

In consequence of these professions and promises, we affectionately receive you as members of this Church, and in the name of CHRIST declare you entitled to all its visible privileges. We welcome you to this fellowship with us in the blessings of the Gospel, and on our part engage to watch over you, and seek your edification, as long as you shall continue among us.

Should you have occasion to remove, it will be your duty to seek and ours to grant a recommendation to another Church; for hereafter you can never withdraw from the watch and communion of the saints, without a breach of covenant.

And now, beloved in the Lord, let it be impressed on your minds, that you can never again be as you have been. You have unalterably committed yourselves. Hereafter the eyes of the world will be upon you; and as you conduct yourselves, so religion will be honored or dishonored. If you walk worthy of your profession, you will be a credit and a comfort to us; but if it be otherwise, you will be to us a grief of heart. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." May the Lord guide and preserve you till death, and at last receive you and us to that blessed world where our love and joy shall be forever perfect.

AMEN.





Rules and Regulations.

Church Members changing their Residence, are earnestly requested to notify the Pastor or Clerk of such change.

ARTICLE I.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES.

SECTION 1. The Officers of this Church shall be the Pastor, six Deacons, and Clerk.

SECT. 2. The Deacons shall hold office for six years. At every other Annual Business Meeting, the term of service of the two Senior Deacons shall expire by limitation, and the Church shall thereupon proceed to ballot for two Deacons. In all cases, officers and members of committees shall be eligible for re-election.

SECT. 3. At the Annual Business Meeting, the Church shall choose by ballot one of its members to serve as Clerk for the ensuing year.

SECT. 4. There shall be chosen by ballot at the Annual Business Meeting, four brethren, who, with the officers of the Church, shall constitute the Conference Committee for the ensuing year.

SECT. 5. At the same meeting, the Church shall elect five brethren, to serve as a Committee on Collections for the year.

SECT. 6. The Superintendent of the Sabbath School shall be chosen annually, in such manner as the teachers of the school may direct. The Secretary of the School shall certify the choice of the same to the Church, which, at its next regular meeting, shall vote whether to confirm the choice so made; and no one shall serve as Superintendent who has not been so confirmed. The same rule shall apply to any Mission School supported by this Church.

SECT. 7. All officers and members of committees shall hold over until their successor has been elected, and has signified his acceptance of the office.

ARTICLE II.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES.

SECT. 1. The Pastor shall be a member of this Church, and shall preside at its meetings; in his absence one of the Deacons shall occupy the chair. The Pastor and Deacons shall be required to sign the Articles of Faith adopted February 27, 1809.

SECT. 2. The Clerk shall keep a record of the business of the Church, have charge of its papers, forward letters of dismission, and at the Annual Devotional Meeting, make a report of the numerical strength of the Church, number of additions by letter and profession, and the removals during the year; also, the number of baptisms and deaths.

SECT. 3. The Committee on Collections shall have charge of all contributions taken up in the Church or at any of the Church meetings, and shall count and disburse the same to the charity for which it was intended, and at the close of the year shall report to the Church the amount of collections for benevolent purposes during the year, together with vouchers for the same, which shall be placed on the files of the Church. The Chairman of the Committee shall, *ex officio*, be the Treasurer of the Church.

SECT. 4. The Superintendent of the Sunday School, and the head of any mission school or work carried on by this Church, shall, at the Annual Devotional Meeting, present a full report of such work for that year.

ARTICLE III.

MEETINGS.

SECT. 1. The weekly Prayer Meeting of the Church shall be held on Friday evenings; and no business requiring discussion shall be introduced.

SECT. 2. The Annual Meeting of the Church for devotional exercises shall be held on the last Friday evening of February, except when that interferes with the preparatory lecture, in which case it shall be on the following Friday evening.

SECT. 3. The Annual Business Meeting of the Church shall be on the last Tuesday evening of February.

SECT. 4. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be observed once in two months, namely, on the 1st Sabbath of January, March, May, July, September, and November, at such hours as the Officers of the Church may direct.

SECT. 5. The Preparatory Lecture shall be on the preceding Friday evening.

ARTICLE IV.

MEMBERSHIP.

SECT. 1. The Conference Committee shall satisfy themselves of the proper qualifications of all candidates coming either with or without certificates. Persons approved by the Committee, shall be announced to the Church on Friday evening, two weeks before the Preparatory Lecture, at which time all certificates shall be read. Candidates to be received on profession of their faith, shall be pro-

pounded before the congregation on the second Sabbath preceding Communion. All candidates shall appear before the Examining Committee at least once.

SECT. 2. On the evening of the Preparatory Lecture, the Church shall vote on the question of receiving the candidates, on condition that they shall afterwards subscribe the Confession of Faith of the Church, and if they have not brought certificates, give their public assent to the Covenant. The vote shall in each case be taken separately.

SECT. 3. On the Sacramental Sabbath, before the administration of the ordinance, the Covenant shall be read in the presence of the congregation, to those who are to be received on profession, to which they shall signify their assent. At the same time, the minister shall declare publicly that A, B, and C have been received by certificate from other churches, naming the churches particularly. A general invitation shall be given from the pulpit, previous to the Sacrament, to all members of evangelical churches present, in regular standing and full communion, to partake of the ordinance.

SECT. 4. All members absenting themselves from the worship and communion of this Church for one year or more, shall satisfy the Committee in respect to their reasons for so doing, or apply for a letter to some other Church.

SECT. 5. The names of Members whose residence cannot be ascertained, so that it shall not be known whether they are living or dead, shall be reported to the Church at the Annual Business Meeting, by the Conference Committee, and after having been thus reported for two consecutive years without hearing from them, their names shall be placed on the retired list and they shall thereafter not be reckoned as members. In case any such members shall afterwards report themselves, their names shall be restored to the active list. When any name upon the "retired list" has been borne upon the Church Records as a

Member for fifty years, it shall be checked off as dead, upon the Church Catalogue.

SECT. 6. All requests for letters of dismissal and recommendation, shall be read at the Church Meeting on Friday evening, and on the next succeeding Friday evening shall be acted on by the Church. Such letters shall be considered valid one year only from their date.

SECT. 7. The Conference Committee shall propound persons applying for membership in the Church, when they are satisfied that each applicant gives sincere consent to, and has expressed willingness to sign the following

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

a. I believe in GOD, the FATHER ALMIGHTY, Maker of heaven and earth; and in JESUS CHRIST, His only Son, our Lord, and in the HOLY GHOST, and that these three are one GOD.

b. I reverently receive the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and believe them to be the inspired Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

c. I believe in the Lord JESUS CHRIST, who, in the beginning "was with GOD," and "was GOD," and "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree."

d. I believe the HOLY SPIRIT has led me to repent of all my sins, and to turn from them, and to obey CHRIST where He says, "If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me."

e. I believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in the final judgment of all men. "He that believeth on the SON hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the SON shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

f. I do not believe that we are saved for the sake of our good works, but "by grace through faith" in the Lord

JESUS CHRIST, and that good works are the certain fruit of such faith. I therefore offer myself for Christian service as a means of expressing my gratitude to Him, and to extend His cause.

g. I cheerfully submit myself to the INSTRUCTION and government of this Park Street Church, as constituted under Congregational form, February 27, 1809, and I promise to promote its purity, peace, and prosperity by all means within my power, so long as I shall continue to be a member of its communion.



